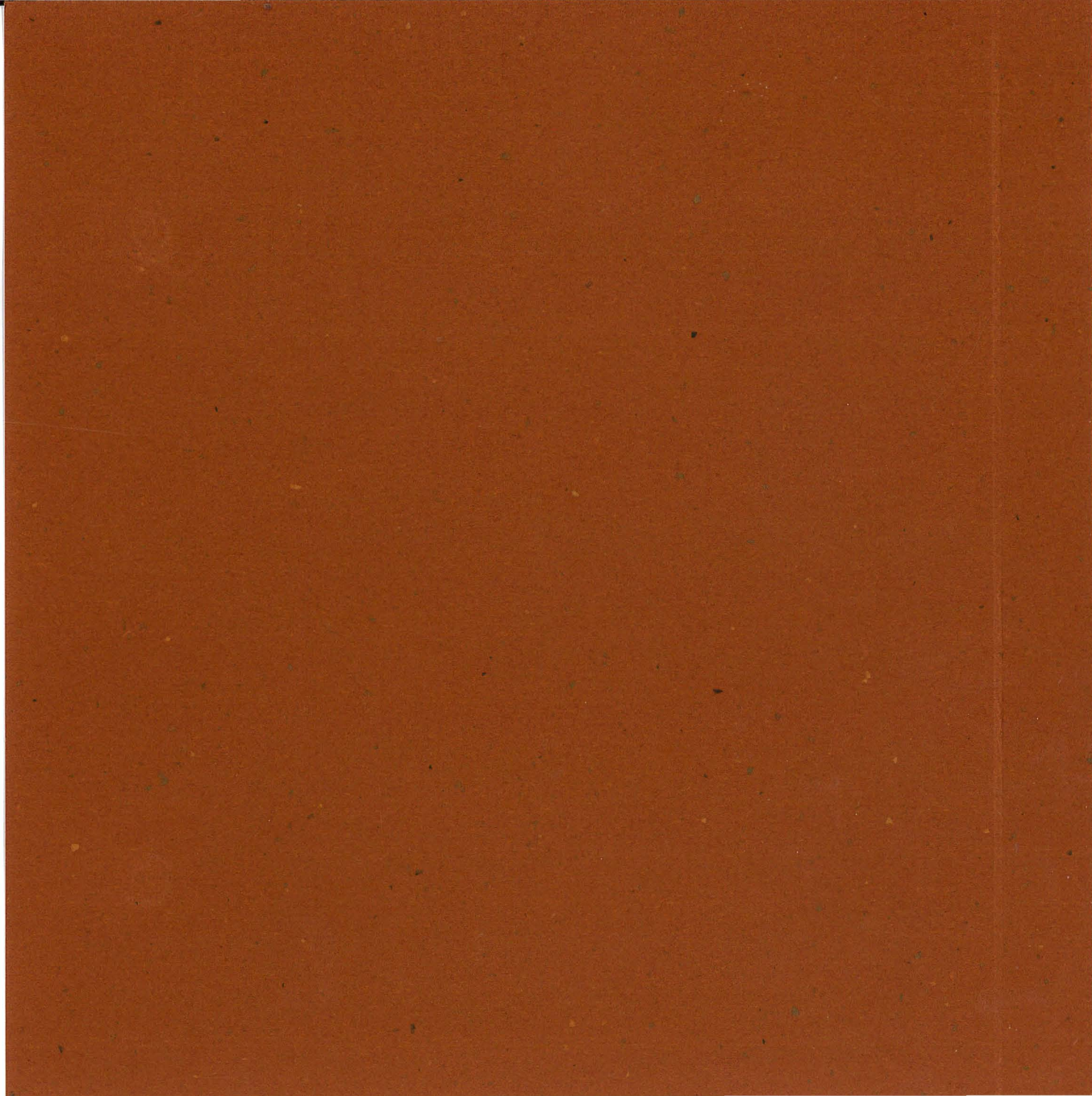


PATTERNS **39** TH EDITION, APRIL  
1997







Okay, so Patterns is different this year. A funkier size, catchier page designs, and brighter colors jump out at you, the reader. And that's what this change is all about - you. We want your attention. Because the stuff inside Patterns has always been funky and catchy and bright. The high-octane quality of the writers and artists in this magazine hasn't changed.

But you have changed. You have a different view - of college, of your community, and of the world. To reflect that, we've changed not only the look of the book, but the way it's judged and the way it's read. This year, we invited a panel of judges from the community to weigh the written entries. We also asked some of our bilingual students to translate some of the winning poetry entries - then talk about what it's like to translate something so slippery as a poem. We're opening up Patterns, because your world is opening up.

So  
now

we  
extend to you,  
in this 39th edition of  
Patterns, more than just an  
invitation. It's a temptation.  
How can you resist?



THE 39TH  
EDITION  
OF  
**Patterns**

A PUBLICATION OF  
ST. CLAIR COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE,  
PORT HURON,  
MICHIGAN



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# Acknowledgments

Special thanks are due to the special people who so readily agreed to give us their time and their expertise to judge the written entries for Patterns. First, to Garth Kriewall of the Times Herald we extend thanks. Journalists, whose days and nights are filled, and who work with deadlines always looming, must especially anticipate any kind of vacation. Yet Mr. Kriewall instantly agreed to my request to read the Patterns entries, deadline and all, despite the fact that he was about to begin a vacation. The student writers at SC4 are the beneficiaries, and we are grateful for his giving us his time and talent.

To Debra Ladensack, Curriculum Director at Port Huron High School, I owe ongoing thanks. Not only did she agree to read and judge the written entries, she has since given me time out of her whirlwind schedule to discuss ways to open more doors between the college and the high school. In her energetic fashion she is preaching the gospel of the arts to students, and the whole community is the better for her efforts.

To Roy Seeger, former Patterns winner, current Western Michigan University student, poet, artist, seeker: thank you. Not only for reading and judging the writing entries this year, but for contributing two new poems for publication in Patterns. Your stuff is good, Roy. Really good. We're proud to publish your work.

To Garey Harvey, a marvelous teacher at Marine City High School, who is having the same impact on students now as he did on me over twenty years ago. I know this because reports from my students coming from MCHS have not varied over the years: He has a sharp sense of humor (though since I share it I prefer the adjective "delightful"), he is an excellent teacher, and he has an incredible passion for literature. I'm glad some things don't change.

*Post script: I was wrong. Things do change, sometimes suddenly and terribly. As we go to press, I have been told that Garey Harvey just passed away. This news is too fresh, too much for me: He was my teacher and my friend.*

Gary Schmitz

## The Ocean as I Understand It

by Roy Seeger

I taste the sea salt on my tongue  
days after I swim in it.  
The snorkel didn't seal around my mouth  
or I kept breathing wrong (I can't remember)  
and I would choke on the saltwater.  
Once, when I drove over the Huron bridge  
I imagined myself standing,  
balanced on the rail,  
staring down  
at the broken water,  
the jutting rocks that just might crack my skull  
should I jump.  
Or maybe I'd hit the submerged Chevette  
that blew off the bridge  
during the winter of '86,  
the same year my brother graduated.  
I hear they pulled that one out two years ago  
and now there isn't even a shadow to aim for.  
I imagine the driver still down there.  
This is what I see when I ponder the ocean.  
I do so because its enormity is overwhelming.  
Besides the lack of salt there is no difference.  
My body tells me so.

Sometimes, when I stand naked in a tub  
of barely warm bath water  
I think of the ocean.  
It's nearly the same except the lack of salt,  
and the presence of  
a bubble ring that clings to the edge of the tub  
even after I pull the plug  
and the water drains  
through pipes  
hidden in the walls and floors,  
like thin rusting fingers  
pointing back to the ocean.



THE **Eleanor B. Mathews** WRITING  
THE **Blanche Redman** POETRY  
THE **Richard J. Colwell**

AWARD  
AWARD  
AWARD

Some changes you plan, some you don't. This one falls in the latter category. When we tallied the scores from our judges, who read entries that have no writers' names on them, we found that the judges had chosen works by the same writer as winners of the Richard J. Colwell Award and the Blanche Redman Award. This had never happened before. "What should we do?" someone asked. Someone else shrugged. Finally, someone spoke. "We should probably congratulate her."

And so we do. Congratulations, **Joe Ann Burgett**, for winning the Richard J. Colwell Award and the Blanche Redman Poetry Award. Richard Colwell, a dearly beloved teacher at this college for 25 years, never could resist a story that took a chance - one that dared to be different. "Find your voice - and follow it!" he admonished. And so Richard would quite approve of "9 times 9" for what it is - it is **Joe Burgett's** voice, and it is different and interesting.

Blanche Redman, founder of Patterns, was also a caring and respected teacher at this college, and, as a renowned poet, was always interested in the very structure of poetry - its rhythm, tone, and imagery. She cared greatly about these aspects of poetry, just as she cared greatly about the students, and so it is a fitting that her family established the Blanche Redman Poetry Award. "April 15th" is a poem that certainly fits the criteria, as you will see when you read it.

Last year, **Joe Burgett** was recognized for her contributions in the poetry and essay categories. This year, she is represented in the poetry category and twice in the short story section. Since the Eleanor B. Mathews Award is given based on a writer's creativity, technical skill, and individual style in a variety of genres and over a period of time, it is fitting that this year's recipient be **Joe Ann Burgett**.

All this while she edits the college newspaper, The Erie Square Gazette, writes for The Times Herald, and carries on with her classes. To find the time - no, to make the time - to write so carefully, and so well, in a variety of genres, makes **Joe Ann Burgett** a worthy choice for all three awards.

Congratulations  
are in order.



# You May Call Me Mrs. Finn

by Mary Zmudzinski

Tu puedes llamrme Señora Finn  
dice ella, furiosamente  
cuando la llama por su primer nombre  
quién se cree el que es  
llamandome Mary, Murmura ella

Nacida antes que la mujer tuviera el voto  
ella ha sabido lo que es el no tener  
dinero o comida, solo orgullo  
ella vió lo que la depresión le hizo a la gente  
cumpliendo con su labor ella trabajó en la guerra

Se caso por amor y formo una familia  
drásticamente lo vió morir  
miro como sus hijos crecieron y florecieron  
nunca ellos sabiendo del esfuerzo de ella  
ella vive su fé, y reza por que sus hijos tambien lo hagan

Ella abla de sus amigas que se quejan  
de que sus hijos nunca las visitan  
ella bromea diciendo que sus hijos nunca la dejan tranquila  
ella les enseñó a respetar a los demás  
eso es lo que ellos le dan a ella

Ella trabajó duro durante toda mi vida  
yo nunca la escuche quejarse  
ella es mi madre  
tu puedes llamarle Señora Finn.

Translated into Spanish  
by Miguel Blanco

You may call me Mrs. Finn  
she angrily states  
when addressed by her first name  
who does he think he is  
calling me Mary, she mutters

She was born before women had the vote  
she has known what it's like to have  
no money or food, only pride  
she saw what the depression did to people  
doing her duty she worked for the war effort

She married her love and had a family  
all too soon she watched him die  
watched as her children grew and flourished  
they never knowing what she had endured  
she lives her faith prays her children will too

She tells of her friends who complain  
their children never visit  
she jokes her kids won't leave her alone  
she taught them respect of others  
that's what they give her

She worked hard all my life  
I never heard her complain  
she is my Mother  
you may call her Mrs. Finn

About the Translation: The poem I have chosen to translate into Spanish is titled "You May Call Me Mrs. Finn," and I selected this specific piece because I felt that it reflected a lot of positive energy and said a lot about women and mothers in general. Somehow I perceived some similarity in this poem to my own mother, and the efforts that she had to make to be able to get a college degree back at my homeland, Venezuela, and raise me as her first child.

The translation of the poem wasn't hard; the only difficulty that I had when trying to translate was making similar words in my language make sense, but this was solved easily by choosing different words and placing them in different places without changing the author's line breaks or affecting the meaning and general ideas of the poem.

Miguel Blanco



ESSAY: SELECTION OF MERIT

## Unconditionally

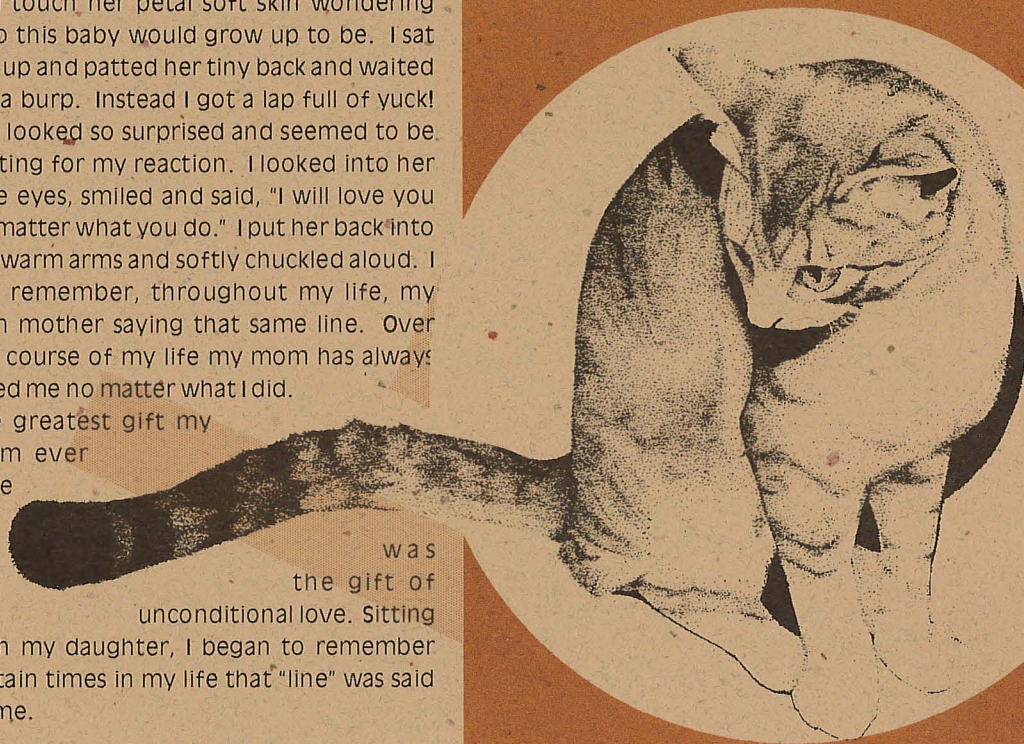
by Annette Skupien

I sat there in a cozy rocker feeling the warmth from my newborn daughter, inhaling the sweetness of her. The minute I held her I was head over heels in love. This was it. I was now a mom. During her feedings, I would brush her peach fuzz head and touch her petal soft skin wondering who this baby would grow up to be. I sat her up and patted her tiny back and waited for a burp. Instead I got a lap full of yuck! She looked so surprised and seemed to be waiting for my reaction. I looked into her blue eyes, smiled and said, "I will love you no matter what you do." I put her back into my warm arms and softly chuckled aloud. I can remember, throughout my life, my own mother saying that same line. Over the course of my life my mom has always loved me no matter what I did.

The greatest gift my mom ever gave me

was the gift of unconditional love. Sitting with my daughter, I began to remember certain times in my life that "line" was said to me.

SELECTION OF MERIT  
**Jokalaylau** by Kenneth Muszynski





Rocking back and forth on my mom's new coffee table, my brother and I laughed and giggled. We were only about four and six (I was the oldest) but we knew we could not use this table as a sailboat. Waves were splashing at the sides and I can remember saying "Man overboard" as I shoved my brother into the carpet sea. Along with him went our glass candy dish ship's wheel. I jumped off the ship and started to run. As I ran, I quickly glanced back at the mess we had made and hit my mother's hip with my head. The look on her face was horrible! I thought, "boy am I going to get it." "What do you have to say for yourself young lady?" she asked rather calmly. "I'm sorry," I whispered. She bent down and kissed me on the forehead and said "I'll love you no matter what." She then got the broom and dust pan to help us clean up our broken ship's wheel that lay in pieces on the floor.

Luckily my mother's unconditional love followed me right into my teen years. Especially when I found myself and a girlfriend arrested and in the city jail. "I can't call my mom," I said, "she'll kill me!" The female officer was enjoying our misfortune way too much. I could tell by the way she said, "Right this way ladies," laughing under her breath. I picked up the phone and called home. My mom answered. "You are where?" she asked. "Do you know what time it is? I'll be right there." Slam went the phone in my ear. Ten minutes later both my parents walked in and never once looked or spoke to me. The ride home was dead silent. As I went into the house I stopped at the front door. I heard my mom behind me say, "I love you no matter what you do, but next time you'll be spending the night there."

Even as I became an adult and married, that love was always there. I had to finally come to grips that my marriage was over. It had only lasted two years. How could I tell my mom? Michael and I had a big traditional wedding with all the trimmings (at my request). My parents had done it all for me and here I was going to tell them it was for nothing. I called my mom one night and in one breath blurted, "It's over. Michael moved home and I am filing for divorce in the morning. I know you said it would not work, we were too young, and not to do it. We did it anyway. I guess I had to learn on my own that this wasn't the right person. I tried to make it work. I did. I'll pay back everything. I know I have disappointed you. I'm really sorry." I hung up quickly. I didn't even let her respond. The last thing I wanted to hear was "I told you so," or "if you only would have," whatever. I sat on the cold kitchen floor of my tiny apartment, curled up in a small ball. The phone rang. I remember picking up the phone and knowing it was my mother on the other end. "I know you gave this your all, but some things in life are not meant to be. No matter what, you are my daughter and I will always love you." That was all I needed to hear.

I was brought back to the present by a little sigh I heard from my own daughter. She was so beautiful, so perfect, but I know that what she does in her life will not always be perfect. I now am realizing the extent of the gift my mother gave to me. The gift that I will pass down to my daughter and her to her children, love your children for who they are and not what they do, unconditionally.



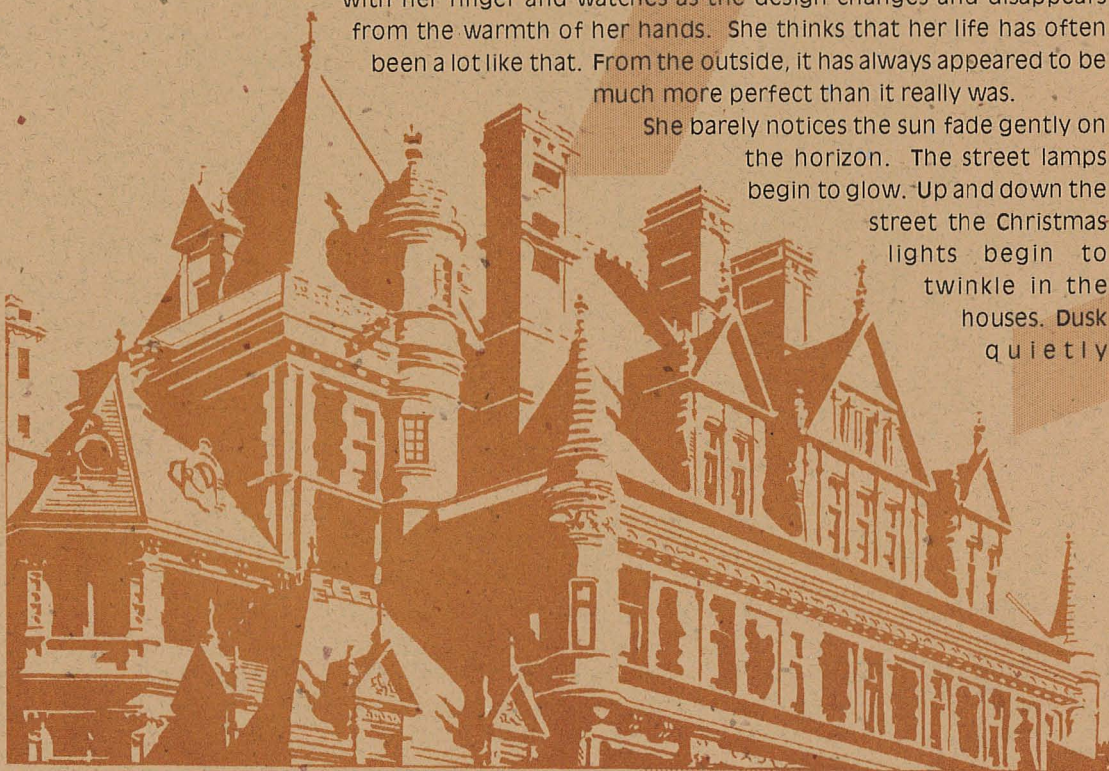
SHORT STORY: SECOND PLACE

## 'Tis the Season to be . . .

by Joe Ann Burgett

She sits quietly in the corner in her favorite chair. She studies the pattern in the frost that is collecting on the window pane. The beauty of the frozen design in the glass fascinates her. She remembers when, as a child, she really believed her mother when she told her that Jack Frost came at night and etched the frozen patterns on the glass while she was sleeping. She traces the swirls and circles of ice with her finger and watches as the design changes and disappears from the warmth of her hands. She thinks that her life has often been a lot like that. From the outside, it has always appeared to be much more perfect than it really was.

She barely notices the sun fade gently on the horizon. The street lamps begin to glow. Up and down the street the Christmas lights begin to twinkle in the houses. Dusk quietly



FIRST PLACE

**Haunted House** by Daishi Iwasa



surrounds her and somehow she forgets to notice that she is sitting there in the room in the dark. Waiting for the darkness to envelop her is second nature to her now. She knows in the depths of her heart that she won't be waiting for the darkness to come much longer now.

Snowflakes gently drift to the ground. Softly at first, and then heavier as the dusk turns to evening. She watches them glisten in the street lights and studies them closely as they drift and dance and glisten. She wonders if it is really true that never has there been two exactly alike. Just like my children, she thinks. She remembers that one of them will be here soon to take her to the family gathering for Christmas Eve. She is as ready as she will ever be, to go.

She pictures what the gift opening will be like later this evening. It didn't take long to shop. She decided to buy exactly what she thought each family member would really want, regardless of the cost. Everything is wrapped now and stacked in bags next to the door. It's not the thoughts but the gifts that count anyway, she thinks to herself.

She laughs out loud, as she imagines the look on her daughter-in-law's face when she watches her grandchildren open the toys she has selected. She's certain she has chosen the noisiest toys on the market this year. But she knows that her grandchildren will love her for them. She thought about her own children when she made her selections. What would Jimmy have asked for? Is this the doll that would have caused Sarah to beg and plead for hours? Is this remote control car something that her youngest son, David, would have hounded her for from Thanksgiving to Christmas Day? Expensive? Screw the expense, she thought.

She bought gifts for the whole family with reckless abandon. By the time she returned home she felt like a drunken sailor on shore leave. She was intoxicated by the emotion that shopping, without any regard to cost, gave her. In her lifetime, she had never experienced such a glorious feeling.

Even right now, sitting here waiting, she remembers the feelings of guilt and buyer's remorse that used to overwhelm her. Instead, now she still feels giddy. Not even a hint of shop-a-holic's hangover, she thinks. She expected some twinge of guilt, some tiny feeling of sadness in her stomach. But not this time. No sir!

Two weeks ago when Jim died, her children, their friends and family surrounded her. They whispered about the fact that from now on, the time period between Thanksgiving and Christmas would always hold unpleasant memories for her. None of them know how I really feel about this time of year, she thinks. She has kept the family secrets well.

No one wanted to mention decorating the house or planning the holidays. Family tradition has always brought her family home to her house for Christmas. The past two weeks since his funeral are the same two weeks she would have normally spent cooking, cleaning, and preparing for the gathering of the clan.

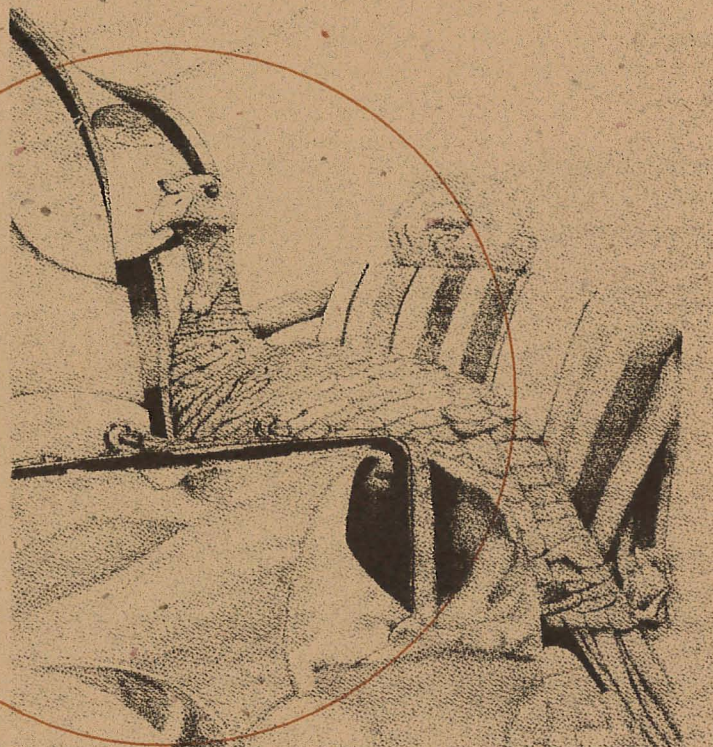


Even her best friend, Martha, was afraid to suggest that she bring out the lights and decorate the house. The ingredients she'd purchased for cookies and fruit cakes still sit unopened in the pantry. For the 47 years she has been married she has made the same holiday treats from old family recipes. Not this year, she thinks, maybe next time.

She can hear the tires crunching in the newly fallen snow out front. More time has probably passed then she realizes. But time just doesn't matter to her anymore. She tries to remember the last time that time really counted for her. She is grateful that her daughter, Sarah, has decided to have everyone come to her house. She is willing to admit that the effort to organize this whole thing would have exhausted her.

Instead, she concentrated on shopping, and shopping she did.

Now that she knows that they are really much better off financially than he ever wanted her to realize, she took the checkbook and headed for the mall. She laughs to herself as she remembers the thrill she felt when she used the credit card for the first time. Chills tingled down her spine. Kind of like sex, only more fun she'd thought to herself. The clerk had looked at her funny when she'd giggled out loud. She laughs when she visualizes Jim rolling over in his grave. Roll over, she thinks. Yes dear, roll over and sit up and beg. She is certain that she hasn't felt this wonderful sense of freedom since she was a young girl.



# SELECTION OF MERIT **Turkey Still Life** by Kenneth Muszynski



She feels a draft blow gently over her from the window. She gets up and turns up the heat. As she hears the old furnace groan and moan in the basement, she reaches over to the thermostat and really cranks it up. She checks to make sure the dial is set at seventy two degrees. You're really living now, sister, she tells herself. She remembers Jim's rules. In the winter the thermostat must always be set at 64 during the day and 58 at night.

She watches as up and down her street cars begin to pull up and families with arms loaded with food and gifts spill out of their autos and into the houses. She listens to the laughter and the joy. She tries to remember when she last felt that total, complete feeling of pure joy. She knows that she will feel it tonight again and anxiously anticipates those feelings in the depth of her soul. She knows that tonight, with her children and grandchildren, she will laugh long and hard until her ribs ache. She almost feels the tears spring forth from the depths of her soul and run down her face until she is almost sobbing.

When Sarah was a baby she was severely allergic and asthmatic. She still is, her mother thinks. Only now, she is able to control it with shots. She remembers that this is the reason they decided to buy an artificial tree. For the first couple of years they were married and when Jimmy was a baby they always had a blue spruce. His folks had always had a blue spruce and if that was good enough for them by God...

She remembers that first big fight they had, the first Christmas they were married. It was exciting to be newlyweds and she had eagerly looked forward to the holidays. It had

## ESSAY: SELECTION OF MERIT

### Kick the Can

by Linda K. Rowe

Tha-unk! Rattle, rattle, rattle!  
The can went flying down the hill,  
kids scattering every which way.

I stayed behind the hedge. I  
hadn't moved all game. I really was  
chicken and I didn't care. Now.  
Later I'd care a whole lot.

Now what I wanted most in the  
whole world was not to be caught.  
So I stayed in that hiding place  
under the hedge until the street  
lights came on and everyone had to  
go home.

When I did crawl out and the  
kids saw me, they remembered they  
hadn't seen me the whole game.  
Then the taunts started. "You hid  
the whole time! Chicken! Chicken!  
Chicken!"

I didn't know which was worse--  
the taunts or being "it," for if I had  
run to the can on home base and  
did not make it in time, I would  
become "it." And I was the youngest  
kid, except for PeeWee, and he was  
so much younger the kids made it  
easier for him. I would be "it" for  
ever.

I worried a lot about being "it."  
What if I was "it" for the whole  
game? Or the whole summer?

Then one day I was suddenly  
bigger and faster and braver. I  
snuck closer to the can, creeping  
from hedge to bush, closer and  
closer. I raced up and kicked that  
can right from under Joey's nose,  
letting all his prisoners go. And I ran  
laughing away to hide again.



been easy to shop for everyone. She reflected on the beauty and majesty of their first tree. It was a huge blue spruce that was level with the ceiling. He grabbed the tree from the middle, and shoved it out the front door and onto the lawn. She marveled at his strength and wondered where it came from. Bulbs and decorations exploded and shattered. The tree became airborne and flew across the snow. The angry words he shouted had long since faded from her memory, but the shock she felt and the fear that had gripped her would stay with her forever. As soon as he was sound asleep, she went outside in the freezing cold and dragged the tree back inside. She couldn't let the neighbors see the havoc he had created. It took her hours to clean up the tiny slivers of glass that were embedded in everything--the walls, the carpeting, even in her clothes and hair. Her body wracked with sobs and the deep despair that filled her soul was like nothing she had ever experienced before.

The next morning, when Jim woke up, he acted as if nothing had happened. No apology, no explanation, not one word escaped from his lips to acknowledge the terror and fear that had filled the room just hours before. He had a startled look on his face when he examined the tree. Was he surprised to see it sitting there? Was he uncertain how she had dragged that huge monster back inside by herself? He threw a one hundred dollar bill on the table as he walked out the door.

"You really need to get some decoration on that thing," he said as he left, not making eye contact with her. "You can spend what's left over on something for yourself. Get something decent to wear."

And that was when the games began. After that it was about every six months for the past 47 years that his temper flared and the tantrums surfaced. His excuses for getting angry always seemed to stay the same. He blamed her for spending too much money. It was always her fault. The dinner was too hot, the weather was lousy, the porridge was too cold. She never knew when it would happen, but happen it did. It was always when they were alone in the room. The next morning was always the same and she would wonder if she'd imagined it all. Except for the bruises on her skin and in her heart, she always cleaned up the mess before anyone saw it.

The Christmas season was always the worst, though. His temper was like a hurricane. It was like an avalanche and took on a life of its own. He got to the point that the tree flew out the door at least five or six times every year, until she finally decided that Santa would bring the tree on Christmas Eve afternoon while the children were napping or playing outside. She became a master at setting it up and decorating it quickly. The day after Christmas she would wake up early and take it down before the children were up and out of bed. During that entire 48 hours she held her breath and prayed that nothing would happen that would set him off and trigger his temper. Oh, he still had a fit and broke things but the tree stayed stationary and the decorations remained intact.



She sits and listens for her son's tires on the driveway. At least the children never had to know about it all, she thinks to herself. And even though, in the last 45 years they were married she was always bruised and scratched, it was on the tops of her arms or her thighs where no one could see. He never hit me, she thinks to herself, at least not with his fists. She shudders as his angry brutal words echo in her head.

She begins to let go of the pain a little and a tiny sob makes its way from the center of her soul until it exits like a tiny squeak from her throat. She realizes that she will never have to suffer through another holiday again. When she counts the number of trips the tree took sailing through the air and all of the money she spend replacing things she had already purchased, she heaves a huge sigh. Tears are silently running down her face. She knows that now she will be safe to decorate a tree and leave it there until she feels like it should come down. Tonight, when I return home I will put up the tree and leave it there until Valentine's Day, she decides.

Her son shouts, "Merry Christmas, Mother!" as he comes through the door. "My goodness, why are you sitting here in the dark? Damn, it's hot in here. Mother, it's 85 degrees. Are you sick?"

He gathers her in his arms and wraps his love around her like a shroud. "Oh, I love you! Are you okay? Hey, let's get going, dinner is waiting." He laughs and shouts and tears are running down his face, all at the same time. "Let's get out of here," he orders.

"I see you didn't put a tree up this year or any decorations," he tells her. His glance takes in everything at once. "Mother, are you all right? Will you be okay? God, please tell me that you won't let yourself go and get all senile on us..."

"No, Jimmy," she says. "I promise I won't get all funny and wear my underwear on my head or forget where I have put my teeth," she teases him. "I will put up the tree tonight when I get home from your sister's," she adds quietly. They gather the bags of gifts and head for the door. She thinks that, maybe, he didn't hear her mention the tree.

"The tree? Great Mother. And won't it be wonderful not to have the damn thing grow little wings and fly about the room this year?" he asks her as he shuts the door.



# Essay on Poetic Moments

by Roy Seeger

I wish I could describe the moment yesterday  
when I walked down the sidewalk  
in the drenched streets of noon,  
leaves blowing in front of me,  
tumbling like children  
from their cradles,

but I don't have the words.

I don't have the words

to convey every sensation every pain every fear every love  
I felt that moment.

I can't find the words.

Where are all the words?

To explain that moment completely  
you would need to know that I just came from my art advisor  
who told me how financially worthless my education is.  
You would need to know that I composed a poem last night in  
an experiment of drunken honesty, but I could never show it  
to anyone. There is too much of myself in it.  
You would need to know that I haven't had sex since June.  
Sex has something to do with everything.  
There are oceans of other things you would need to know,  
embarrassments that need never have happened,  
all my frustrated half-loves,  
to understand what compiled that poetic second  
that makes my words ring hollow  
as a silent bell  
or leaves matted to the sidewalk  
while other leaves playfully dance, or flee, or whatever,  
like a squirrel  
always dashing away at the last second, no matter  
how carefully you creep.

You may also need to know that I was hungry.  
I don't know why,  
but it was important to me at the time.



SELECTION OF MERIT  
**Distortion**  
by Miguel Blanco



## Mystical Daffodils

by Joan Pagel

Growing up in the country I spent most of my time outside. I would take long walks in the fields and woods exploring everything I saw. One warm, spring day I found a secret place; a field so beautiful it took my breath away. From the edge of the woods, as far as I could see were daffodils, acres of them completely surrounded by trees. I went to my secret place every day I could and played for hours getting lost in its beauty.

Walking through the field, being careful not to break a single stem, I was amazed with the kaleidoscope of colors. It was like a rainbow at the end of a warm, summer rain. The sunlit field glowed with different shades of yellow, white, pink, and orange sprinkled with a few streaks of red, all blending together to create a menagerie of colors. Each single daffodil had its own unique size and shape, as a crowd of people, ranging from curvaceous figures to misproportioned bodies. The pasture of auspicious flowers, each one with its own pulchritude, was secluded from the rest of the world to thrive under the peaceful sunshine.

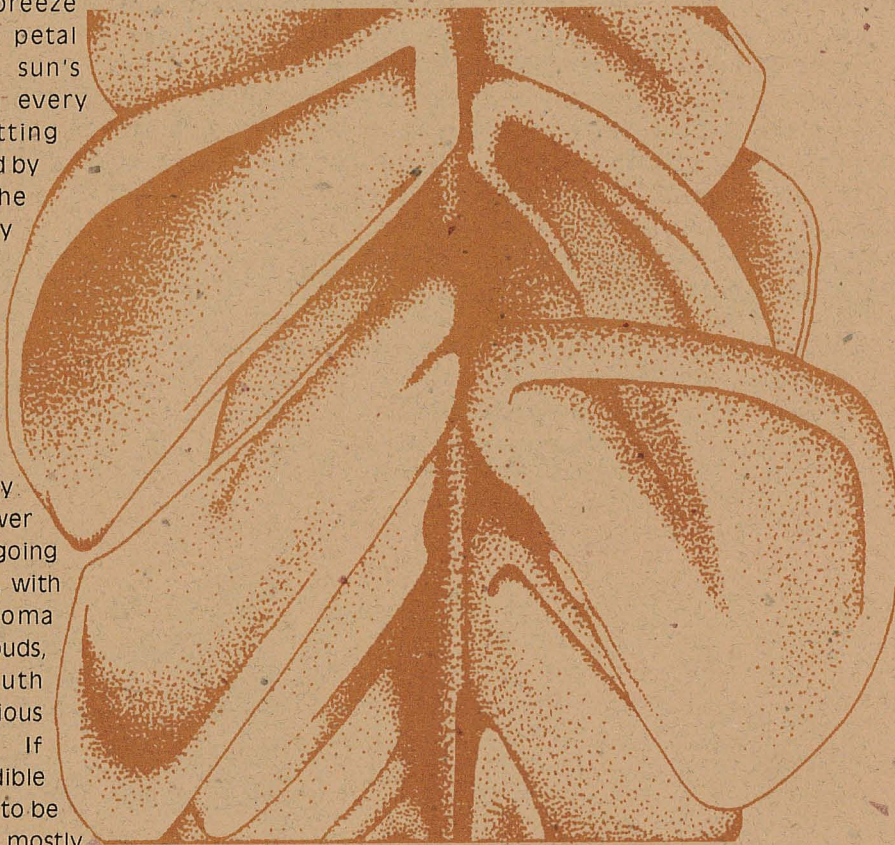
Sometimes I would play in these cosmetics of the earth and pretend I was a bride on my wedding day. I would pick the most petite daffodils I could find, those being somewhat more malleable than the bigger ones, and carefully weave them together creating my wardrobe of accessories. I would have a halo, necklace, and bracelets all made of daffodils, their petals feeling like velvet against my skin. Then I would design the most elegant, picturesque bouquet a bride could ever hope to carry at her wedding, using every different color and petal pattern I could discover. Once I was completely decorated with beautiful softness, feigning to be a true bride, I walked down an aisle of sheer



elegance. The flowers were so enchanting I could make believe anything with them, but sometimes, I would just sit and slightly brush them against my cheeks, relishing the softness of their perfectly formed petals.

The boundary of trees, skyscrapers of the fields, that hid my secret wonderland furnished winds that caused the flowering ornaments of nature to whisper softly, as if they were having a conversation. Quietly I would listen to the hint of chatter with the buzzing of bees in the distance, watching the breeze arouse each petal catching the sun's reflection with every movement. Sitting there, surrounded by splendor, with the wind gently blowing my hair and the sun warming my face, I couldn't imagine a more tranquil place on earth.

Visiting my sequestered flower garden was like going to a candy store, with the sweet aroma teasing my taste buds, making my mouth water with delicious expectations. If daffodils were edible they would have to be like candy, being mostly



THIRD PLACE **Tree Ears** by Matthew McLarney



sweet with a surprise of sourness every so often. The spectrum of colors would represent the flavors and the velvet touch of the petals would make it thick and rich like chocolate that melts in your mouth, sending delightful impulses through your whole body. The enchantment of the flourishing garden made it possible to enjoy such a delicacy created from imagination and the inspiration of nature.

Locating the intermediate point of the daffodil playground I would sometimes sit, encompassed by the luscious aroma of sweet perfume. The towering trees produced a scent of pine to intermingle with the daffodil fragrance, creating an exclusive potpourri. Every puff of wind would enhance the aroma awakening my senses with every breath I took. The sensuous odor arose from the pond of blossoms as fog escapes the earth with the change in temperature. The ubiquitous fragrance would sweep me away like a daytime dream. Before leaving my secret garden I would usurp a beautiful bouquet to fill my home with their glorious charm.

I went to my secret place every spring and watched the daffodils flourish until the hot summer sun would wither them away, leaving me only with poignant memories. As a child the crop of flowers was a place of mystical beauty. To have the privilege of sharing such a beautiful seclusion of nature was a pleasure I enjoyed for many years. The glory of nature is something we can all enjoy. Alexander Pope describes its wondrous beauty in these lines from "Summer":

"Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade,  
Trees where you sit shall crowd into a shade:  
Where'er you tread, the blushing flowers shall rise,  
And all things flourish where you turn your eyes."

SELECTION OF MERIT

**Sunday Brunch**

by Yen-Ling Mulholland

## Sunday Brunch

April 6, 1997

10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

with

**Friends of the Arts**

St. Clair County Community College

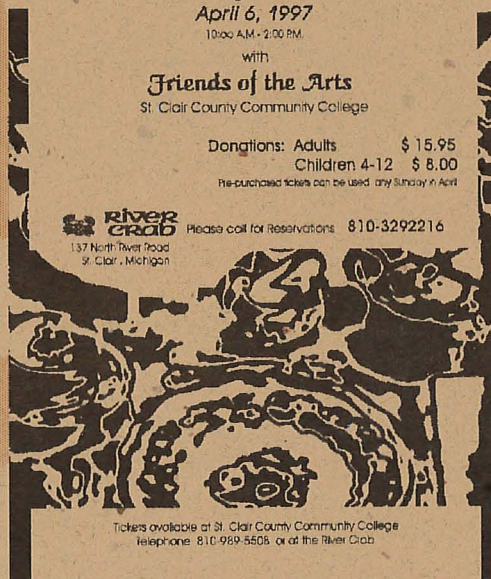
Donations: Adults \$ 15.95  
Children 4-12 \$ 8.00

Pre-purchased tickets can be used any Sunday in April

**River Club**

137 North River Road  
St. Clair, Michigan

Please call for Reservations: 810-3292216



Tickets available at St. Clair County Community College  
telephone: 810-999-5505 or at the River Club



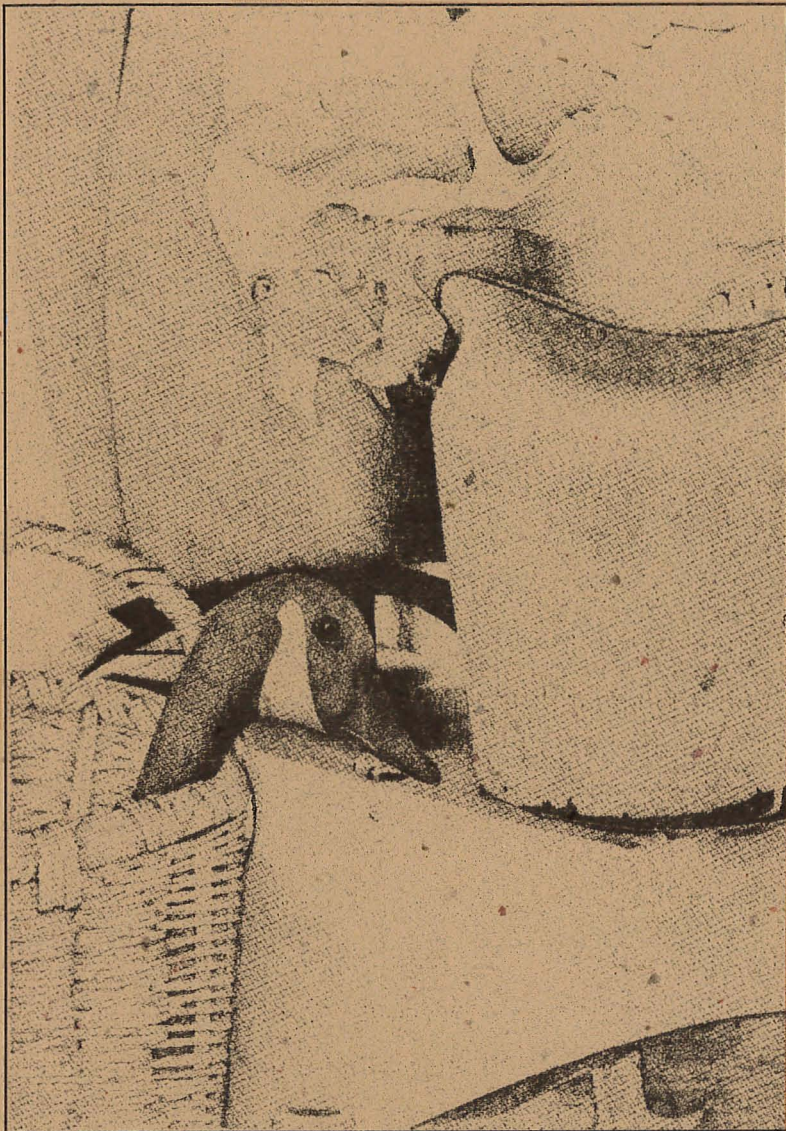
POETRY: SELECTION OF MERIT

## The Cacophony of The Crow

by Stacie A. Olshove

Early in the morning  
The crow's caw ruins the sleep.  
The cold harshness of the  
crow's caw rings in my ears,  
they are trying to close the morning.  
So, I raise my hands to  
shield my ears.  
But, it is no use, I have to  
greet the morning  
again,  
with my imitation of the  
happiness that left my being to long ago..  
How I look forward to  
sleep;  
it is my only escape from  
the shrill of the crow.  
This leads me to utter  
sadness within my life.  
I put on my front to face  
that world that I had put so much trust into but it  
spewed and slammed it  
back. My being was at a  
loss with no chance of return;  
immunity seemed to ignore all  
that I used to be and turned on  
it's coping skills and stayed there  
with the caw of the crow;  
forever lost within it's cacophony.





SECOND PLACE

**I See You**

by Steve Seppo



ESSAY: FIRST PLACE

## Split

by Jacqueline Reed

When I was fifteen, my world exploded. The pieces eventually fell back to earth, but they would never again form the old, familiar pattern. That was the year my parents divorced.

Three years have passed, and I have accepted the situation. I look and act like a happy, bright college student. But there are still dark blossoms of anger and blame in my heart. My parents' divorce forever changed the way I feel about my parents and myself.

My parents were married for over nineteen years; and in all the time I can remember, I only saw them fight once. Maybe they didn't care to fight; maybe they just became more and more distanced from each other over the years. Well, they weren't the only ones who became distant. They had ripped my life apart; suddenly I could not trust either of them. Trusting people gives them power to hurt. So I pulled away. I hid in my bedroom with the door locked and the curtains closed and cried like a bruised

SELECTION OF MERIT

### Wrenches

by Tom Becka





and beaten child. Even now, I avoid getting too close to them. When my dad says he loves me, I smile vaguely and say "okay." If my mom tries to hug or kiss me, I shrink back in my chair and turn my face away.

My parents didn't seem to hate each other when they got divorced. In the months that followed, though, I was exposed to a side of them I had never seen: they were bitter, angry, vengeful. I remember my father talking to my mother on the phone. He slammed the phone down after a few seconds. His face was red, furious. "God, I hate that bitch!" he said. Then he looked at my brother and me, at our stunned faces, and said "Oh. Sorry."

My mom was just as bad. My bedroom is next to hers, so night after night I had to listen to her endless stream of telephone conversations about my father; how stupid he was, how much she hated him, how her lawyer was trying to get more money from him--every detail of the divorce. All of a sudden, I had no idea who my parents really were; the people I was seeing were not people I could love.

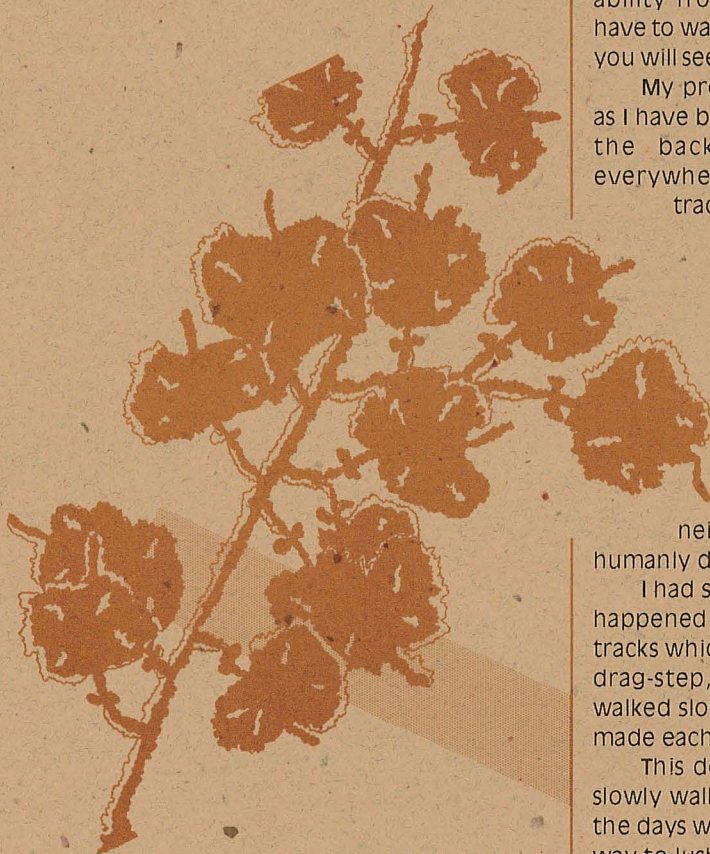
They did not live together anymore, but my parents still had to communicate about some things. They wouldn't talk to each other, so they used me. They could carry on entire arguments that way: "Tell your father he needs to pay your dentist bill"; "Tell your mother my insurance won't cover it, so she has to pay"; "Tell your father it's his responsibility..."; and so on, and on and on and on. What they didn't realize was that it hurt me when they used me to make demands on each other. They were so busy arguing that they didn't have time to see that I was in pain. They didn't see the hurt change to anger, the anger change to contempt for them, and the contempt lead to withdrawal. When the withdrawal became depression, they didn't see that, either.

They did not see it, so they kept adding to it, especially my mother. Whenever I would act out--say something mean--stay out too late--her response was always, "Why don't you just go live with our father!" Why didn't I? Because he had remarried and I knew his 29 year old bride would not welcome a teenaged stepdaughter. I had no options; I felt alone and unwanted, and that was the worst effect of my parents' divorce.

Not all of the effects of their divorce were terrible, though. I am more independent now than I would be if they were still together. I earn my own money; I have to--if I asked them for anything, it would start them arguing about who paid for what. I make my own decisions about my life; I neither need nor want their guidance.

Yes, I have put the pieces of my life back together, but I did it without the help of my parents. They are a smaller part of my life now; I visit my dad only once every two weeks or so, and I avoid my mom whenever I can. My parents' divorce caused me so much anger, so much hate, so much loneliness. I cannot give them the power to make me feel that way again.





SELECTION OF MERIT  
**Shiver** by Kumar Sarcar

ESSAY: SECOND PLACE

## Dear Trails

by Linda K. Rowe

Anyone can follow animal tracks in the snow. You don't have to inherit some special ability from your ancestors. You merely have to walk slowly with your eyes down and you will see mini highways of animal activity.

My property supports many deer and, as I have been putting out corn and hay on the back hillside, their tracks are everywhere. But something about the tracks I found one morning puzzled me. There were drag marks in front of every hoof print.

Drag-step, drag-step, drag-step, went the trail.

The alarmist in me feared that while following these tracks I would find an injured deer lying helpless in the woods. I even began to plan what I would do—run to my neighbor's house to get someone to humanly destroy the suffering animal.

I had stopped to consider this plan and happened to glance behind me at my own tracks which appeared in a familiar pattern; drag-step, drag-step, drag-step. When I walked slowly, I dragged my boots before I made each step.

This deer, I reasoned, was sauntering—slowly walking along; perhaps dreaming of the days when the winter white would give way to lush spring green.



## "Women"

by Stacie A. Olshove

Pretty, thin, gorgeous with the  
ego of the thousand men, yet  
the personality of only three.  
Vomit comes to mind upon  
the thought of these women  
WHY-  
has He chosen some to have  
two, some one, and some none?  
Born for a bikini and some for a ten  
but, I have gone  
to the point of no extent  
to hate each and every  
one of the Cosmopolitan and  
Centerfold women because; I wasn't the chosen.  
But, in actuality he didn't  
choose them  
they chose him.  
Society has set the mold  
that women are supposed to  
fit or should, I say, "men have  
written the rules to that one."  
Why, I ask, can't we, the UN-chosen  
have a chance at will power to  
become what we want to become?  
This world of the Beauty sickens  
me. Hatred, jealousy, and envy have  
consumed much of my time and color of  
Life, that I could have used  
somewhere else.

Self-esteem stays  
Within the lowest  
level manageable, in turn  
has made my life an  
excruciating hell to cope  
with the feelings of losing  
the only thing I truly love.  
It might drive insanity into  
the one thing I truly love along  
with my mind and soul.  
Plummeting to the pits of  
self acceptance and turmoil  
to continue with this so called  
mortal being that I have been issued.  
Should it have been what society  
had required; I would not need  
to feel this way about the  
beautiful people who I judge  
and hate before meeting or crossing  
of lives has taken place.  
Maybe, one day, I will accept  
what has been issued  
to me like a toe tag with  
great pleasure and accept  
others who are not like  
ME.



SELECTION OF MERIT  
**Anger** by Miguel Blanco





SHORT STORY:  
FIRST PLACE

## 9 Times 9

by Joe Ann Burgett

She was deep in slumber, the world around her had faded into eternity. She felt the pain and discomfort in her private parts. She concentrated on keeping her eyes closed and not letting her eyelids flutter. She had figured out a long time ago that if she pretended to be asleep, sometimes he would go away. He didn't go away, really. He would begin to breathe deeply and fall asleep. Shortly after he passed out he would snore loudly.

As soon as she knew for sure he was fast asleep she would move out of his way. She hated his awful smoke-n-beer breath the most. She had figured out a system in her head for making the time go faster and to help take her away from the reality of him. She used to have a favorite blue corduroy dress. It was covered with hundreds of alphabet blocks with the letters all scrambled.

When she was daydreaming in class, she would study the pattern and repeat the alphabet in her mind. Abcde...and on she would sing to herself. When she finally learned to read she would make words out of the letters. She could feel the ripples of the corduroy on her skin as she would rub the cloth and form the words in her mind.

When he  
would visit  
her

in the  
night, she  
would make herself  
see the dress hanging in the  
closet in the darkness. She would



imagine the corduroy between her fingers and spell out the words. When she began to memorize the times tables she would recite them over and over again to herself. He could manipulate her body, but he couldn't penetrate her mind.

Nine times nine, she would think to herself. And backwards she would go, until he fell asleep or went away. She wanted him to go away. Sometimes she wished he would go away and never come back. She hoped he would die. But instead, it just went on forever and ever.

She would turn her head so she couldn't smell his breath. Sometimes she would listen for her mother. She wondered why she didn't come to help her. Maybe it was better if they didn't make him mad when he was drinking. Everyone tried to keep the peace when he was drunk. They whispered when he was sleeping, tiptoed so they wouldn't wake him up.

Tonight, she began to recite her times tables again. The pain spread into her stomach. The dull ache burned between her legs and it was hard for her to keep her breathing even and shallow. She tried to concentrate on controlling her eyelids. Against her will, her lids squinted and tears began to roll down her face. She felt like she was falling and she couldn't concentrate.

She wanted it all to stop. She wanted him to go away. She tried to be quiet and to be a good girl. Suddenly, her eyes popped open. For a moment she couldn't figure out where she was. She was sobbing softly.



The shadows were unfamiliar. At first, she felt lost and confused. Then as her eyes began to adjust to the dark she saw her husband's shadow. She took a deep breath. It wasn't beer and smoke that she smelled, but his cologne. It took her a few moments to come from the depths of her slumber, back to reality. As her mind focused, she remembered that she didn't know her times tables. As an adult, she couldn't remember them past five times nine. And after a few minutes, she realized that she hadn't worn corduroy in a long, long time.



SÉLECTION OF MERIT  
**The Liberal Arts**  
**Face the Brave New World**  
 by Yen-Ling Mulholland



About the  
Translation:  
I chose this  
poem  
because it is a  
traditional poem.

I am more  
comfortable with  
poetry about nature. "My  
Garden" was relatively  
simple, except for a couple  
of problems in lines 5 and 8.  
For example, the term "rat  
Like creatures" in line 5 was  
impossible to translate. Line  
8, while the most beautiful  
line of the poem, escapes  
translation. So in my  
translation I was able to  
present the physical  
attributes of summer but  
not the spiritual promise the  
last line offers.

Another problem was  
the concept of summer. In a  
tropical climate people do  
not look forward to the  
intense heat and discomfort  
of summer, so I have used  
"Bahar," our term for spring.  
Fatima Ali

## POETRY:

### SELECTION OF MERIT

## My Garden

by Mary E. Zmudzinski

Early spring  
dust blows across the barren land  
  
the occasional leaf left from autumns  
descent - skips and flutters about  
  
tunnels burrowed in winter by rat like  
creatures - heave up from the ground  
  
summer dawns and the land bursts forth  
with delights the senses will behold.

## Mera Bagh

Shuroo bahaar aur  
khak kay bagolay - banjaar zameen

Khizan ka koi patta uttarta hai  
hawa kay thapairon main urta hai

Sarma ki surangain  
zamin par ubharti hain

bahar tuloo hoti hai  
zamin ki zarkhaize phat parti hai

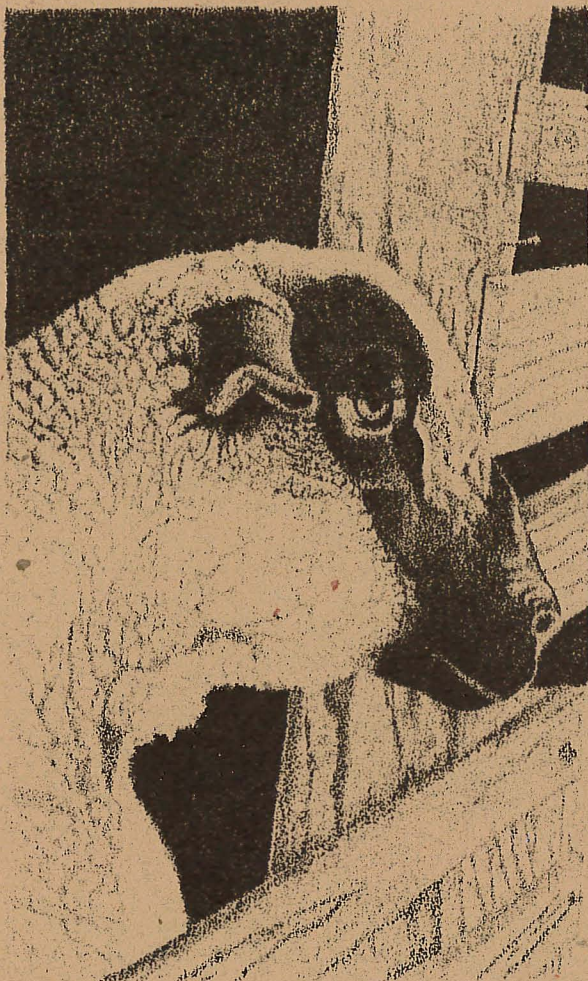
Translated into Pakistani  
by Fatima Ali





SELECTION OF MERIT  
**Yesterday Erased** by Yen-Ling Mulholland





SELECTION OF MERIT

**Piper** by Adrienne Richardson

ESSAY: SELECTION OF MERIT

## A Step Back In Time

by Ron Rabidue

I love the fall season. It is the time of year that brings back fond memories. As I look back, having been raised on a farm, one of the events that took place was making cider. Since we rarely had time to trim the branches, and never used chemical sprays for insects, we had to depend on mother nature to give us a year with an abundant apple crop.

When the apples were ripe, we would take the tractor and trailer around to the various apple trees on the farm, for they were scattered all over. We picked only the choice apples from each tree until we felt we had enough. When we picked all we needed, we returned to the house and sorted through all of them once more, inspecting them for worms or damage. Then we placed them in a big galvanized tub and washed them off.

Next thing we had to do was get the cider press out of storage and take it outside, because making cider created a big mess. We had to completely dismantle the press for cleaning, before using it. The wooden



sections had to be washed and scrubbed. Some of the seams opened up due to the wood drying out and washing the wood caused it to swell up and close the gaps. The steel internal mechanism had to be rubbed and polished, to remove any rust that might have occurred from sitting idle. Once that was done, it had to be reassembled and then we were ready for the apples.

There was a hopper on top of the press where we put the apples. Sometimes we would throw in a few pears to make the cider a little sweeter. My job was to place a board on top of the apples, keeping a constant pressure on them. This forced the apples into the grinder blades, as my dad turned the crank on the side of the press. The apple pieces would fall straight down into a round cylinder. This cylinder was about the size of a common household pail. It was made up of wood slats spaced evenly apart and held together by metal bands. The cylinder rests on a flat platform, with sides, that directs the juice along and dumps it into a pan. When the cylinder is full of apple pieces we would slide it along the platform until it is directly under the long press shaft. Then a flat board, that is cut the same inside diameter as the cylinder, is placed on top of the apple pieces. The long shaft is threaded with a wheel attached to the upper end of it. The wheel has three lugs, equally spaced, welded to it. The wheel is turned clockwise by hand until it doesn't turn anymore. Then a large bar is placed between the lugs on the wheel, which is used for leverage. The wheel is then tightened a few last turns and the juice runs through the slats of the cylinder, down the platform, and into the pan. Once the juice stops flowing the pressure is released from the shaft and the wheel is backed out of the cylinder. The apple remains are knocked out of the cylinder. The cylinder is placed under the grinder and the process starts all over again. The cider is run through a piece of white linen cloth to strain out any seeds or apple chunks that slipped through the cracks of the cylinder. The cider was then put into gallon jugs for storage and cooling.

After all the cider is made, the clean-up then begins. The press is disassembled, then scrubbed and washed with water. It is then dried, reassembled, and put back in storage.

While the cider making process was taking place, my grandmother was making warm homemade donuts, which we called fried cakes. After all the work was done, the celebration would then begin. Everyone would get their fill of cider and donuts.

As I think back at this event I've come to this conclusion. The hard work made the cider taste a little sweeter. Grandmother's love made the donuts taste a little better, and neither one could be duplicated by any grocery store today. In closing, I would like to leave you with one thought. Do you think, that with today's modern process of making cider, they actually find all the apples that might have a worm in them?

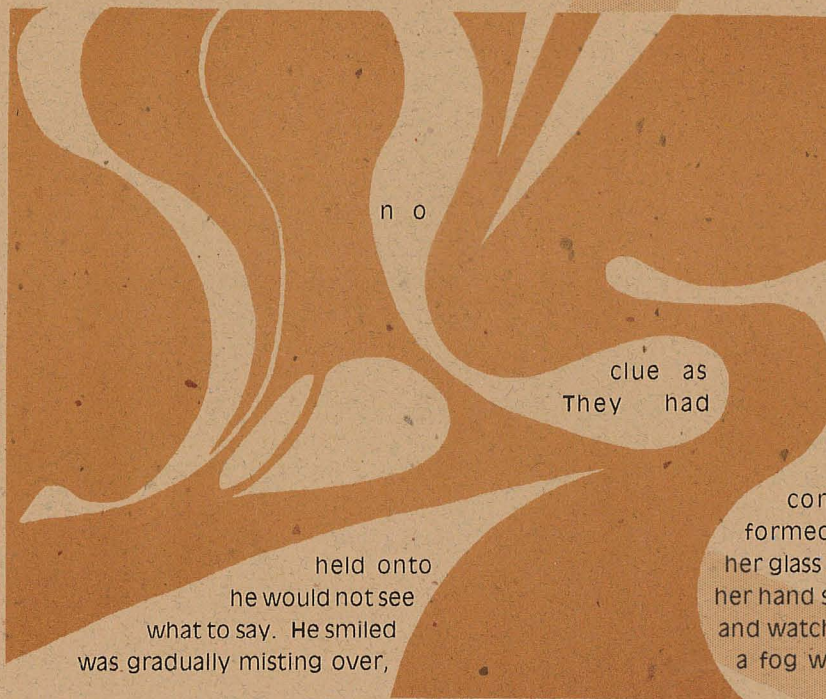


## Adultery

by Sharon Warren

### SELECTION OF MERIT

**Spilled Milk** by Ronald J. Atherton



They sat in a booth by the window. The seats were worn black leather with brittle cracks exposing a nicotine colored foam that pinched the underside of the woman's thigh. On the other side of the window, semis lumbered up the hill, their gears grinding with the effort. This bar, set in the middle of town's industrial park, a corner dive so-to-speak, was a place where they were sure one would know them.

The woman searched the man's face for some kind of reading, some kind of to where this was going. They had never been together, alone before. She felt uncharacteristically self-conscious; perspiration formed on her upper lip, she held onto her glass of cognac tightly so that she would not see her hand shake. He smiled what to say. He smiled and watched out the window that was gradually misting over, a fog was rising from the black



steel sill upwards, giving the view of the street a surreal mask. She followed his gaze and saw the world as a mechanical dream--gray pipes, cold slate glass, rusting iron, and mobile columns of smoke--a cement sanctuary, a much safer place compared to this table where the two sat. She concentrated on the rings of moisture left behind by their drinks, these rings were her anchor; her fingers touched the cool wetness to reassure her by the familiar. She felt as though she were seated in a black box spinning through space; her every cell like an antennae, alerted to the next movement, the next word. She knew that she should not have come but she also knew that it was inevitable that she would be here, before this person who was slightly more than an acquaintance, not even a friend really but someone with whom she knew there was some undeniable connection. Their spirits were not strangers but danced around each other in an unseen choreography that had no certain ending.

The flame of the candle wavered in its plastic fishnet husk. Her heart pounded beneath her ribs, she could even see her sweater move discreetly to its bass rhythm. This nervousness was overwhelming; she decided with relief that would leave, go home and sleep, innocuously alone.

old woman stood. A shadow came across the window and there an old woman stood. A cigarette hung from her mouth, she puffed in and out without touching it. Through the haze the woman saw that the old woman wasn't really old but that her skin was taupe, sanguine, crinkled and thin like crepe paper. Her clothes were composed of layers upon layers of filthy, worn material whose colors had faded to match her skin. She scanned the window without even seeing the couple; looking for some unknown person or object or maybe even at her own reflection. She threw her cigarette down, spit behind it, and shuffled slowly away.

The man looked at the woman with a raised brow and sympathetically shook his head at the retreating figure. The woman took in a deep breath,

"Would you like to go? I know a place," she said. In silence, their drinks unfinished, they got up and left.



POETRY: FIRST PLACE

## April 15th

by Joe Ann Burgett

it's tax day and they have an appointment,  
their worldly goods have been divided and the divorce is pending  
it's all over including the shouting...

she's lost 65 pounds since she last saw him,  
so she puts on her make-up carefully  
and dresses in her best--so he will eat his heart out...

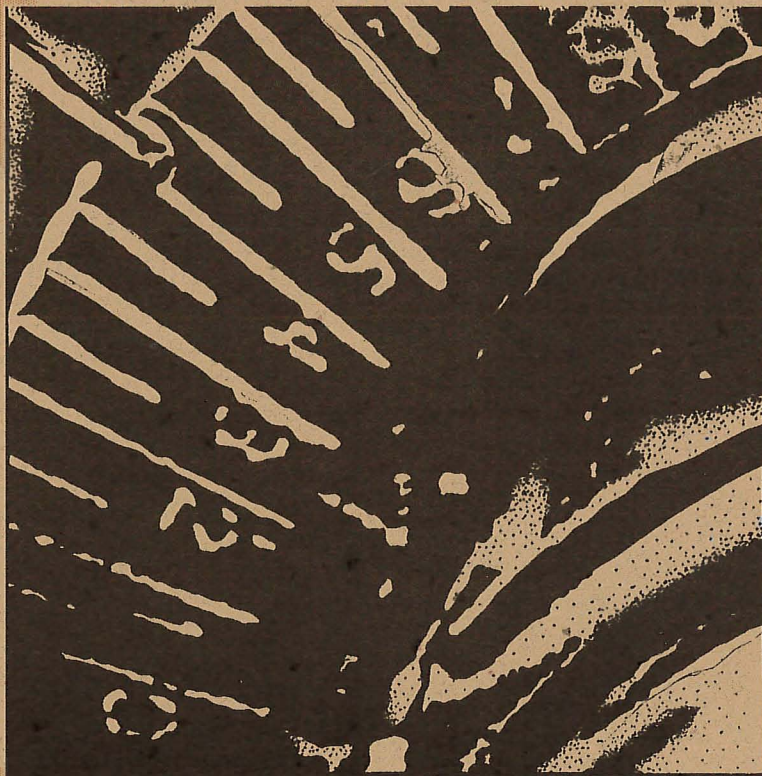
the accountant doesn't know what to say  
after fifteen years of helping them  
keep their affairs in order, now they have fallen apart...

the paper work completed and signed  
she puts on her coat and gets ready to leave  
recognizing the desire burning in his eyes...

"hey, you look terrific" he smiles  
and tries to help her with her coat  
"did, I ever tell you that you have beautiful brown eyes?"

thanks, my eyes are green, dear...





SELECTION OF MERIT  
**Compass** by Keith A. Gardener



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*Friends of the Arts is an organization of citizens of our community who are interested in supporting the arts and promoting programs in the arts at St. Clair County Community College in music, theatre, creative writing and the visual arts.*

*With the retirement of Dean Patrick Bourke, the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Arts has been reorganized and expanded. The co-chairs are now Patrick Bourke and Nancy Nyitray. Secretary-treasurer, Geri Reed; ex officio, Christa Adams. Other board members are: Sylvia Bargiel, Susanna Defever, David Korff, Al Matthews and Margaret Stone.*

*We at the College deeply appreciate the support of our benefactors, sponsors, distinguished donors, patrons, and friends. If you believe in the importance of the College arts program and your name is not listed among the contributing Friends, we invite you to attend our events and to join with others in keeping Arts Alive in St. Clair County Community College.*

*For further information on Friends of the Arts, contact Nancy Nyitray or Geri Reed, SCCC, 323 Erie Street, P.O. Box 5015, Port Huron, Michigan 48061-5015, phone 810/984-3881.*



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